



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

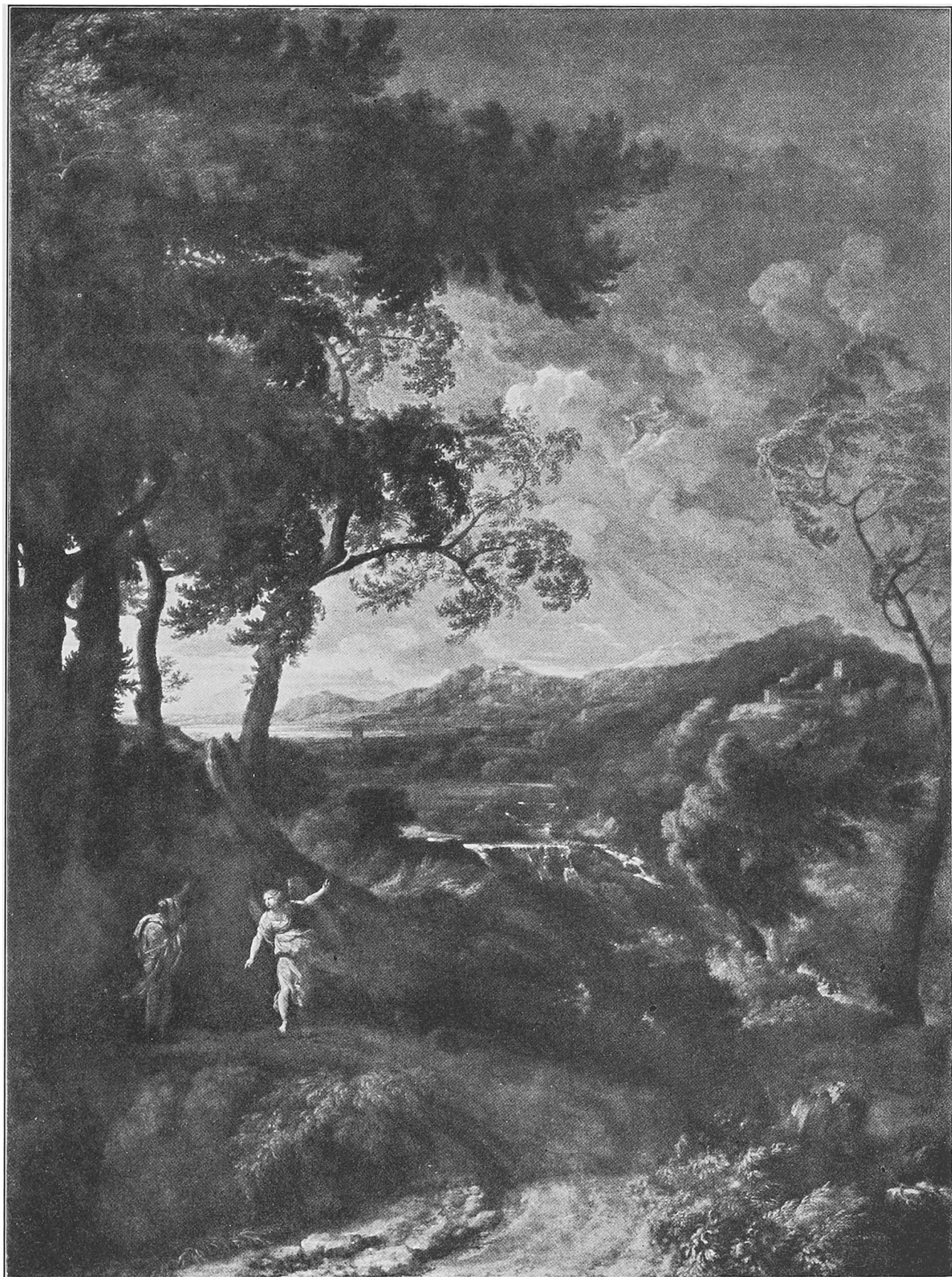
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



"THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM"

BY GASPARD POUSSIN

A Great Work of Art

See page 65

ANALYSIS OF WORKS OF ART

By Petronius Arbiter

A GREAT WORK OF ART "THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM"

By GASPARD POUSSIN

(See page 64)

OUR CREED

THE logical Standard of Art Measurement for a sure evaluation of Works of Art is based: on rare examples of the highest manifestations of the Six Elements of Art Power.

That is to say: The Greatest work of Art in the World is that one in which we see manifested:

First: A Subject, which is socially the most beneficent, of interest to the greatest number of people, and the noblest in Conception;

Second: In which the Expression—on the faces of the figures, in the details, and in the work as a whole—expresses profoundly that which the work is supposed to express;

Third: In which the Composition is the most sublime;

Fourth: In which the Drawing of all forms is the most true and effective in rendering Life, above all,—ideal Life;

Fifth: In which the Color is the most varied and rich;

Sixth: In which the surface Technique is the most vigorous, appropriate and un-offensively individual; the whole work of such a Quality, and so co-ordinated, as to insure a Style, at once Personal yet Universal, in which a Subject is Expressed with the greatest Completeness and Harmony: so as to stir the highest emotions of the largest number of cultured people for the longest period of time.

We consider a work of art Great or Trivial in ratio of the degree to which it measures up to this Standard.

THIS month we choose to analyze some landscapes, although we think landscape art is fostered and practised too much and by too many artists in America. The reason is because mediocre men who cannot draw with that exacting power which figure work of a high order demands, often turn to landscape painting to achieve at least a living, if not more. When will our American public wake up to this fact and not only demand more figure works, but be more ready to support those artists who are making strenuous efforts to paint figure pieces? A mediocre figure piece is always of more interest and value than a mediocre landscape, and only the greatest kind of landscapes can stand on the same level with a first-class figure piece. Moreover, our ranks of landscape painters are overcrowded with practitioners.

After reflecting over our creed as above, this picture: "The Calling of Abraham," by Poussin, needs no extended comment, but we will say—it is a sublime and great work of art, principally because it lifts one very much above the commonplace things of this world. Only great and sublime things can do that.

The foundation of all art being the expression and the stirring of human emotion, a work of art which stirs our highest emotions by lifting us to the sublime is greater than one which stirs only

our ordinary or low emotions. This picture by Poussin meets all the requirements of great art because:

First: the subject "The Calling of Abraham" is one of the most sublime an artist could choose; and in the *conceiving* of this subject Poussin was truly sublime in feeling and true to the demands of the exalted subject.

Second: As a *Composition* there are few landscapes so majestic in the history of art, its lines and masses lifting the soul to another and higher world.

Third: The *Expression* is faultless, the gesture of the angel calling Abraham and the expression of surprise by the latter satisfy our demands for expression in the main figures. Besides, the work as a whole expresses a supra-terrestrial region as befits the place the Lord should choose for so high a purpose as "The Calling of Abraham."

Fourth: The *Drawing* in all its details is faultless.

Fifth: The *Color-scheme* is majestic and wonderfully beautiful and in harmony with the subject and composition. Would that we could supply a colored reproduction to prove this!

Sixth: The *technique* or *surface painting* is of that perfect kind which, while being universal in its appeal, is still "personal" enough with Poussin's own private stamp to make it possible for the experts to say that this is not a picture by Claude Lorraine or by Nicholas Poussin but by Gaspard Poussin, and that is a sufficiently personal stamp. Anything beyond that indicates the beginning of egomania.

Technique need not be so personal that it appeals only to a few sacro-sanct individualists, who adore the plastering-over of a picture with the peculiar catpaw hatching, scratching and scraping they have dug out of their inner consciousness inflamed by a diseased hunger to put their personal stamp on a work, and for which they sacrifice every beauty possible in a work in order to emphasize such peculiarity, and which is often atrociously stupid or vulgar in spirit.

Therefore, this work of Poussin responds nobly to the highest demands of the exalted subject chosen, is profoundly expressive of that subject and thus lifts us to the empyrean. That is why it is great.